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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Chile

DATE DISTR. 20 April 1949

SUBJECT Position of the Nationalist Party of Chile in
Relation to the Agrarian Labor Party

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1. A meeting of the Executive Council of the Nationalist party of Chile was held on 16 March 1949 in the party's Calle Huerfanos 1164 headquarters. During this meeting, the party president, Hedilberto Bizama Merino, stated that the great electoral gains achieved by the Agrarian Labor party in the recent 6 March elections should be regarded as both a potential danger and a real opportunity for the Nationalist party. According to Bizama Merino, members of the Nationalist party acted correctly in supporting the Agrarian Labor party in the recent elections since the Nationalist party was not legally inscribed and had not presented any candidates of its own. However, he pointed out that with the success of the Agrarian Labor party, many former Nationalists are now deserting in favor of the Agrarian Labor party. As an example of this defection, he pointed out the cases of Javier Lira Merino, Marcos A. Salun, Arnaldo Rodriguez Lazo, and Julio Von Mullenbrock Lira. These individuals, although members of the Nationalist party, ran for office on the Agrarian Labor ticket and have renounced their Nationalist party membership since they won the election.
2. Bizama Merino pointed out that the presence of many Nationalists as members of the Agrarian Labor party offered the Nationalist party a wonderful opportunity to infiltrate and eventually dominate the Agrarian Labor party. However, he stressed the danger of the less fanatical Nationalists abandoning their dual role as both Agrarian Laborites and Nationalists in favor of the Agrarian Labor party alone.
3. Bizama Merino commented unhappily on the fact that the Agrarian Labor party had refused membership to such outstanding Nationalist party leaders as himself, Olaf Ulloa Perez, Federico Mujica Canales, Gaston Alejandro Acuna McLean and Luis Callis because their Nationalist ideology is too well known. According to Bizama Merino, it is unfortunate that the Agrarian Labor party has apparently decided to follow a comparatively democratic line of opposition to the present government.
4. During an executive meeting held on 25 March, Eduardo Borne Sandoval stated that Agrarian Labor party Deputy-elect Arnaldo Rodriguez Lazo claimed that more than 20,000 individuals had requested membership in the Agrarian Labor party. Rodriguez Lazo stated that the Agrarian Labor party intended to refuse membership to those applicants suspected of Communist sympathies, to those widely known for their rabid nationalistic tendencies, and also

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to those believed to be merely attempting to obtain a seat on the bandwagon of the recently successful Agrarian Labor party. According to Borne Sandoval, Rodriguez Lazo estimated that approximately 20 per cent of the applicants would be turned down.

5. Borne Sandoval also stated that Rodriguez Lazo and Agrarian Labor party Deputy-elect Javier Lira Merino had declared that the Agrarian Labor party intended to follow a leftist line but would not enter into any agreements with Communist or pro-revolutionary elements or parties. Rodriguez Lazo and Lira Merino also allegedly stated that the United States looks with suspicion upon this party and that it would be necessary for the Agrarian Labor party to give assurances to the United States with respect to the pro-democratic policy which it intended to carry out. Both Rodriguez Lazo and Lira Merino assert that no Chilean political party can hope to maintain itself in power, even if it manages to obtain control of the government, if this party is opposed by the government of the United States.
6. At the end of the meeting, Hedilberto Bizama Merino suggested that 5 April, the date of the founding of this party, be celebrated by giving a dinner to which will be invited General Ibanez and all the Agrarian Labor party Congressmen, as well as a selected group of leaders of other parties. This suggestion was accepted and Eduardo Borne Sandoval, Victor Hidalgo and Orlando Espinoza were entrusted with making the necessary arrangements.

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